

morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Homeland Security appropriations bill. The chairman and ranking member will be here on Monday to work through the remaining amendments. There are currently four amendments pending. Additional amendments will be offered on Monday.

Under the previous order, we will vote in relation to the Schumer HAZMAT truck amendment at 5:30 p.m. Any other votes ordered during Monday's session will be stacked to occur immediately after the vote in relation to the Schumer amendment. Therefore, Senators should expect more than one vote on Monday afternoon.

Again, I remind my colleagues that next week the Rosh Hashanah holiday begins Wednesday. It is imperative that we finish the bill prior to that time. Senators should expect busy days during next week with numerous roll-call votes.

Finally, I thank every one for their hard work this week. Earlier this week we were able to expedite and pass an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to help fund FEMA's efforts in Florida. Last night we passed S. 1368 relating to awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King. Chairman McCAIN secured passage of H.R. 361, the Sports Agent Responsibility and Trust Act.

Yesterday the Senate passed S. Res. 421, which condemned the terrorist attack in Beslan, Russia, and sent condolences, on behalf of the leaders and the U.S. Senate, to the families of those victims.

Earlier this week we confirmed three additional district judges, and I hope we will continue that pattern of considering judicial nominations before we conclude our work this year.

Finally, on a personal note, our colleague, Senator SMITH of Oregon, who is occupying the chair now, was on the floor of the Senate last night to ensure that the Senate passed S. 2634, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, which the Democratic leader, our leadership, and both sides of the aisle joined together to unanimously support.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator DASCHLE and Senator BYRD for up to 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, will the majority leader clarify something? It was my understanding that we were going to get an agreement that all amendments would have to be filed by 4 o'clock on Monday. I apologize; I came to the floor late and Senator

REID wasn't here and I just don't know. I have not had the opportunity to ask anybody about this. Would the Senator enlighten me as to the status of that?

Mr. FRIST. Yes. It is something we have been working on back and forth for the last 24 hours, and that is the intention. We will try to get that early on Monday; we still have that goal for amendments to be filed. That is the intention. Because of various schedules today and the managers leaving at certain times, we didn't have everybody here to agree upon that, but that is the intention. When we come in early Monday, hopefully we can get that consent. I think both sides of the aisle agree that is the objective.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the leader. And I, too, congratulate the Senator from Oregon for his leadership on an important piece of legislation. I hope we can get it to the President on time.

GUARD AND RESERVIST BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this year marks the 60th anniversary of the GI bill of rights.

That law, debated and passed in the same week Allied Forces invaded Europe, not only demonstrated America's enormous gratitude to the men and women who fought for its freedom, it creates the foundations of the extraordinary prosperity that followed the end of the war.

The bill encapsulated all that was best in America. Those who defended the American dream were offered a share of the American dream.

Harry Colmery, a Republican from Pennsylvania who served as the National Commander of the American Legion at the time, wrote that "it [was] the duty, the responsibility, and the desire of our grateful people to see to it that those who served actively in the armed services . . . not only should not be penalized as a result of their war service, but also that upon their return, they should be aided in reaching the position which they might normally have expected had the war not interrupted their careers."

Our military has changed a great deal in the past 60 years.

Increasingly, our national security is defended by members of our National Guard and Reserve forces—men and women who volunteer to put aside their jobs, and leave their families and communities any time our Nation is threatened.

Forty percent of the troops fighting in Iraq are members of the National Guard or Reserve. One-hundred-sixty have given their lives.

Just as Congress thanked the men who liberated Europe and Asia and preserved democracy 60 years ago, the time has now come for Congress to repay our debt to the reservists fighting the war on terror around the world and struggling to bring peace and security to the people of Iraq.

The time has come for America to show a commitment to them that

matches their dedication and service to us.

Many of the current benefits, policies, and support systems for reservists have been in place for decades and their value has eroded over time.

Moreover, the experience of reservists in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq has demonstrated serious gaps in the benefits we offer them.

Moreover, even as we place a heavier burden on reservists, commanders warn that lower recruitment numbers and higher rates of retirement pose a threat to the continued readiness of our Reserve forces.

We cannot afford to close our eyes and hope this problem solves itself.

We have only a handful of weeks before the 108th Congress adjourns.

National security should sit alone at the top of our agenda, and there are few things more important than ensuring our Reserve forces have the tools they need to achieve the missions we assign them.

Therefore, in the spirit of the GI bill, in gratitude for their valor and sacrifice, and in recognition of our growing reliance on a powerful and effective Reserve force, I am introducing the National Guard and Reserve bill of rights.

This bill codifies a set of rights the men and women serving in our National Guard and Reserve have earned with their service to our Nation.

First, every reservist has the right to straight answers about their deployments. In the last few years, the Department of Defense has often failed to communicate to citizen soldiers and their families when they can expect to be reunited.

South Dakota's 740th Transportation Company, for example, was first told in February 2004 that their work in Iraq was over and that they would be heading home.

In the final days before their departure, they received word that they would remain in Iraq until April, 1 year after they had first reached Iraq.

As this date approached, their deployment was extended for an additional 90 days. These soldiers ultimately returned home in July, nearly 18 months after their activation date.

This kind of situation undermines troop morale and places an unfair burden on their families, businesses, and communities that rely on Guard and Reserve troops. I believe we owe our soldiers honest answers.

My bill would require the Pentagon to treat Active Duty and Reserve forces equally. If active duty forces are deployed abroad for 1 year, reservists would also be activated for 1 year.

It would also require the Department of Defense to conduct a "lessons learned" review of Reserve forces' deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, so that the miscommunications and mistakes reservists have experienced recently will not be repeated in the future.

Second, every reservist has the right to the best equipment the Nation has

to offer. Reservists are serving on the front lines alongside full-time soldiers. They are facing the same bullets.

They deserve state-of-the-art equipment. However, since the beginning of the Iraq war, we have heard disturbing reports from many Guard and Reserve families in South Dakota, and from national media, that reservists have experienced severe shortages of body armor, night-vision goggles, rifles, and other critical equipment.

I am calling on the GAO to conduct a study about equipment reconstitution in the Guard and Reserve following Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom to assess their equipment needs for future contingencies.

Third, every reservist has the right to adequate, timely, and problem-free compensation.

The GAO has issued two reports in the last several months that call attention to deep-rooted problems in the automated pay system for reservists.

Their most recent report found that as many as 95 percent of reservists have experienced pay problems during their deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

My bill will create a position within the Defense Department whose primary responsibility will be to implement the GAO's recommendations and fix the problems with the pay system once and for all.

I also believe that reservists should be compensated for their increased commitment for the last few years. My bill will double the value of re-enlistment bonuses and extend them to career reservists who serve longer than 14 years.

Fourth, every reservist has the right to quality, affordable health care.

For 2 years, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I have been working across the aisle to provide access for all reservists to the military's TRICARE health care system.

This initiative is critical to maintaining readiness among Guard and Reserve units, and will serve as an important recruiting and retention tool as well.

My bill would permanently provide all reservists with access to the military's TRICARE health care system, ensuring that Guard and Reserve personnel are fit to answer duty's call whenever it comes.

Fifth, every reservist has the right to child care during his or her deployment. When members of the Guard and Reserve are deployed for duty, many leave behind families with small children.

For many, Reserve duty makes child care become both more necessary and less affordable. No reservist should have to sacrifice care for his or her children in order to serve their country.

That is why my bill, following on the good work of my colleague Senator MURRAY, would increase funding for child care for families with parents deployed away from home.

Sixth, every reservist has the right to employment when he or she returns from active duty. We cannot ask reservists to fight for their country and then force them to fight for their job once they come home.

Unfortunately, the number of complaints filed by reservists who experience problems with returning to their jobs after a deployment has risen by 50 percent since the war on terrorism began, and there may be hundreds or even thousands of other reservists who have had problems but have not filed complaints.

My bill will strengthen the protections USERRA offers and ensure that reservists know their rights.

Seventh, every reservist has the right to education benefits. The Montgomery GI bill, passed in 1984, set reservists' educational benefits at 47 percent of the benefits offered to Active Duty soldiers.

Twenty years later, that proportion has fallen to only 27 percent. This erosion is even greater considering the high increases in the cost of higher education.

My bill would raise reservists' education benefits to the level set by the Montgomery GI bill at the time of its passage, and would ensure that the value of these benefits rise at the same pace as the cost of higher education.

Eighth, every reservist has the right to a fair retirement plan. As deployments grow longer, citizen soldiers are being prevented from contributing to their civilian retirement plans.

Service to one's country should not come at the expense of a secure retirement.

My colleague, Senator CORZINE, has led the fight to improve the Guard and Reserve retirement plan, which has not changed in over 50 years.

Like Senator CORZINE's bill, my legislation would reduce reservist retirement age from 60 to 55, a proposal that is endorsed by several leading advocates for National Guard and Reserve personnel.

This proposal is especially critical for States like South Dakota, where many reservists have jobs on farms or with other small businesses that have no civilian retirement plans.

Finally, every reservist has the right to representation at the highest levels of the Department of Defense. Our military force—Active and Reserve—is undergoing a transformation to make it better suited to confront the security challenges of the 21st century. We must ensure that the needs and concerns of National Guard and Reserve personnel continue to be heard at the highest levels of the Defense Department during this transformation.

My bill will create a new Deputy Undersecretary for Reserve Affairs who will participate in all decisions involving reservists and carry reservists' concerns to the most senior Pentagon leaders.

These nine rights should be guaranteed every member of our Reserve

forces. Serving in the Guard or Reserve is no longer a one-weekend-a-month commitment.

Reservists are serving on the front lines, facing the same bullets as full-time soldiers. Battlefield commanders are relying on them to serve with courage and skill, and reservists are meeting the challenge.

The sacrifices we ask of reservists are many. But as the authors of the GI bill realized 60 years ago, America owes a debt to the men and women who defend its freedom. We should not compound their sacrifices through neglect or indifference. The brave men and women of the Guard and Reserve have earned the benefits and improvements I am proposing.

The time has come for the Government to recognize this new role and redouble our support for these courageous Americans.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join with me in support of the National Guard and Reserve bill of rights, and to move swiftly to pass it into law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

HOLLOW TRIBUTE TO THE VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I begin my words today by reading from the 33rd verse of the 18th chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, the King James version of the Holy Bible.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Mr. President, tomorrow will be a day of painful remembrance for our Nation. The passage of time has done little to numb the anguish of that September morning 3 years ago—how we do remember—when 19 ruthless terrorists commandeered four commercial aircraft and transformed them into the stuff of nightmares. The memories are still too raw, the images are still too vivid, the toll of human misery is still too overwhelming.

And so we remember, and in our remembrance we pay homage to the victims and the heroes of 9/11. But we owe more. We owe more to those who perished on September 11, 2001, than merely remembrance. And we owe more to the American people than merely paying lipservice to their safety.

That is the primary reason that we are here today, debating the Homeland Security funding bill. We are here because of the rescue workers who moved so quickly, so valiantly, to save lives, only to sacrifice their own. We are here because of those thousands of men and women who, on that crystal clear morning of September 11, 3 years ago, were sitting at their desks, walking through the halls, doing their jobs, only to have such brutality abruptly